

The Forgotten Road



Sully Slave Quarter Exhibit

Sully Historic Site
Fairfax County Park Authority





The Forgotten Road

For many years, an eroded 18th century road-bed and archaeological remains were discovered in the late 20th century, revealing a footprint from the past. That footprint became the foundation for the Sully Slave Quarter exhibit, where you can retrace the footsteps of Sully's enslaved individuals as you take a walk on the Forgotten Road.

In 1787, Richard Bland Lee inherited 1,500 acres of land and 29 enslaved men, women and children from his father, Henry Lee II. The involuntary labor performed by these individuals gave Lee the opportunity and means to live the life of a gentleman farmer and to serve as Northern Virginia's first congressman.

Little is recorded about the daily lives of the enslaved individuals at Sully, but journals, letters and newspaper notices provide some clues

to their labors and the trials they experienced. Most slaves probably toiled in the fields, but some were assigned to special tasks. Several young women were charged with spinning, sewing and work in the house. Madam Juba and Patty labored over exhausting laundry



tasks while Thornton, a cook, worked over a hot fire in the adjacent kitchen. Sam and George, both blacksmiths, probably worked in small outbuildings that have long since disappeared.

Two African-Americans are known to have resisted their enslaved condition at Sully by running away. Ludwell was reported to have "*absconded . . . with Mr. Lee's valuable tools*" and Godfrey "*rode off [on] a large dark grey mule.*" Ludwell was captured and returned to his family. It is not known if Godfrey's bid for freedom was successful.

The following newspaper notice offers a glimpse of the attitude of the subscriber toward his runaway slave, but more importantly, it also provides information about other aspects of 18th century life, such as the clothing worn by members of enslaved populations.

Transcription of Advertisement, *Alexandria Advertiser*, January 6, 1807.

Fifty Dollars Reward,

RAN-AWAY, from the sub-scriber, a negro Man named Godfrey — below the middle stature aged about 30 years — he is rather black, has a down look when he speaks or is spoken to, and has a thick voice. He had on when he went away, a dark mixed cloth short coat and pantaloons and a light striped waistcoat. He rode off a large dark grey Mule, shod before. The above reward will be given to any person who will deliver him to the jailor at Fredericksburg — or Ten Dollars for securing him in any other jail, and all reasonable charges paid.

Richard Bland Lee
January 3 — 5

The printer of the *Federal Gazette* at Baltimore, the *Herald* at Frederick town, and the *Virginia Gazette* at Richmond, are requested to insert the above 3 times in their respective papers.

Slave Quarter



At Sully, most domestic, skilled and field slaves lived in quarters composed of dwellings built through their own labor. Several such structures existed along the South road near the site where the Lees' barn once stood.

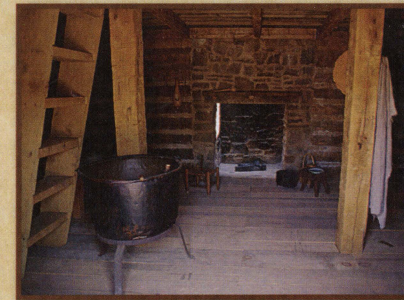
Stephen Collins, Richard Bland Lee's father-in-law, described these structures in a letter to his wife: "*. . . all these houses have good chimneys on them and are very different from such as I have seen for that purpose in the lower part of Virginia . . .*"

-Stephen Collins
September 1794

When he tried to sell Sully in 1801, Richard Bland Lee boasted that his farm offered "*every necessary house for labourers...with brick or stone chimnies.*"

-*Virginia Gazette* and *Alexandria Advertiser*,
February 9, 1801

As many as eight or nine people may have used this type of house for shelter, cooking, eating and sleeping. The surrounding grounds offered equally important living space for outdoor tasks, communal activities and socializing. Small gardens were probably planted nearby.



Archaeology



Animal bones discovered on the site offer clues about the diets of enslaved populations. The absence of burn marks on many of the bones suggests that the meat was boiled for stews, a mainstay of the African-American diet. Deer and squirrel remains indicate that hunting augmented the rations traditionally provided by

Virginia slave owners, such as cornmeal, pork, herring and, occasionally, beef. Excavated coins may indicate that the slave quarter inhabitants participated in a cash economy selling homegrown foods or handmade objects to neighboring farms and communities.



Artifacts recovered near the Sully slave quarter site.



The representative slave dwelling at Sully was built using construction methods and tools common to the 18th century.

The representative slave quarter located along the old South Road was built on top of the original archaeological footprint. Excavations of the site revealed the dimensions of the building and the location of the fireplace and windows. Evidence suggests that two similar structures existed, one on either side. The three structures were grouped along the lane and were situated over a natural swale, or indentation, in the bedrock. This bedrock served as a pier for one side of this structure's foundation. The building's appearance is based on archaeological evidence and on research of typical slave dwellings of the period.

The slave quarter was built to help illustrate the complex story of daily life and slavery in the late 18th century at Sully. Funding for the construction of the dwelling was provided by the Sully Foundation, Ltd.



Slave quarter loft

Tours and Information

Forgotten Road tours are offered at 2pm daily except Tuesdays, from March to mid-November.

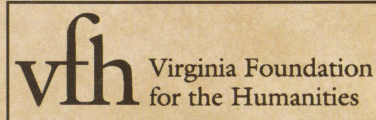
For further information or program schedules, contact:

Sully Historic Site
3650 Historic Sully Way
Chantilly, VA 20151

703-437-1794

Visit our web page at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully

Funding provided by a generous grant from



To request reasonable ADA accommodations, call

Inclusion and ADA Support at
703-324-8563. TTY 703-803-3354.



A Fairfax County, VA
publication • 12/07